

before been decided by the Convention. Now I submit the question, is it competent, is it proper for the same thing to be brought up over and over again, except on a motion to reconsider? If that is according to parliamentary practice in order, I see no end to our deliberation; for the same questions can be brought up again and again, *ad infinitum*, to the exclusion of our regular business. I know there is no specific rule to prevent it, as printed; but is it parliamentary law? I raise that point of order.

The CHAIRMAN, (Mr. Purnell.) The Chair is under the impression that the point of order is not well taken.

Mr. MILLER moved to lay the motion to amend upon the table, but withdrew his motion at the request of

Mr. PUGH, who said: This may as well be settled finally by a vote. I only wish to explain the vote that I shall give. I have voted pretty steadily, I believe, in favor of altering the rule. I voted in the first place in favor of an amendment which struck out the latter portion of it. I may be under a misapprehension; I may misunderstand what my duty is here, as one of the majority of this Convention. As one or two of my colleagues seemingly entertain different views, I think it important, especially as the subject has been so frequently discussed, and such frequent allusions have been made to those who have taken the course that I have pursued, that I should explain my position.

It has been said here repeatedly that this Convention has met for a very serious purpose, and in very serious times. Under these circumstances the minority have conceived it to be their duty to claim all the rights to which minorities are entitled; and to demand, I think, rather more than minorities according to parliamentary usage are entitled to. I admit, sir, that these are serious times. I admit there never did assemble in the State of Maryland a body before whose deliberation there have been placed more important subjects than will be placed before this deliberative body. I admit that these are terrible and disastrous times, and that under these circumstances ought to demand and ought to have all the rights to which they are entitled.

But admitting these things, what then? If it be true that in deliberating upon this important subject in this important time, it is important for the minority to look out for their interests and maintain their rights, how much more important is it that the majority of this Convention, sent here by a majority of the people, should look out for the rights of the majority and protect their interests, which they were sent here by their constituents to defend. These are some of the reasons why I think the majority will act properly in not tying their hands in this manner or in any other manner.

At the same time that I defend my position

as being supported by that view, I wish to state that it is my intention as one of the majority to accord to the gentlemen of the opposition all the time for debate that they require. All that they of right could come here as a minority and ask, that shall always receive my cordial support. I have not taken the position I have indicated from any want of courtesy to them, but as a serious matter of duty. I do not say that this question has arisen in the course of the business of the Convention, showing us clearly that the position the Convention have taken is a wrong one. I do not say that we may not remain here and pass every article in the Constitution by 49 members of this body. But I do claim that we, as a majority of this body, are derelict to our duty, to our constituency, and to ourselves, in relation to the important measures which may be brought before us in these awful times, if we detract one iota from the power which has been given to us to come here and do our duty. I do not say that we shall diminish our power if we maintain this rule; but for fear that we shall, I intend to vote so as to leave to those in whose hands it belongs the power of making a Constitution for the State of Maryland in spite of the opposition which has been sent here. At the same time that I claim that right for the majority, and claim that they shall exercise it, and by my vote shall assist them in exercising it—

The CHAIRMAN, (Mr. Russell,) interrupted the debate with the announcement that the hour had arrived for the consideration of the order of the day, the Declaration of Rights.

Mr. CLARKE. Have not the majority elected 61 members to this Convention.

Mr. PUGH. Yes sir.

Mr. CLARKE. Having 61 members, if they fail to get 49 votes will they not fail to discharge their duty to their constituents?

Mr. PUGH. I have thought the matter over, and am ready to answer the gentleman. I can conceive of circumstances in which the action of this body may be delayed and totally stopped by the minority, under this rule.

Mr. CLARKE. Unless there is a division of opinion on the part of the majority or a failure on their part to perform their duty, will they not have full power to give a majority vote of 49 upon any question that comes up?

Mr. PUGH. I will answer the gentleman's question by asking another. Has the gentleman never heard of such a thing as balance of power?

The CHAIRMAN, (Mr. Purnell.) This debate is not in order. The order of the day has been taken up.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's, moved the postponement of the consideration of the order of the day for half an hour.

Mr. PUGH. I have no more to say, if I can be permitted to answer one point which has been taken repeatedly.